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February 15, 2023

# WRANGELL SENTINEL

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## Lawsuit could shut down commercial troll fisheries in Southeast

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
*Sentinel reporter*

Southeast trollers and communities are awaiting a federal judge's decision on a lawsuit that could close down the region's chinook troll fishery. If the lawsuit prevails, Southeast trollers would be denied access to the highest-priced salmon available to the commercial fleet.

The lawsuit seeks to ensure more of the salmon make it to an endangered population of killer whales in Washington state.

The Southeast winter troll fishery is underway and will close March 15; the summer season is slated to open on July 1, pending the judge's ruling.

On April 16, 2020, the Wild Fish Conservancy, a Washington-based nonprofit organization, filed a lawsuit against the National Marine Fisheries Service, claiming that its 2019 environmental analysis failed to allow enough chinook, or king salmon, to return to Puget Sound and feed southern resident killer whales.

If the suit is successful, Southeast troll fisheries could be shut down or restricted until the environmental analysis is redone and accepted by the court, if the court orders a new review. Or the fishery could be closed if the case stretches into an appeal.

Southern resident killer whales are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Their population was at only 73 to 74 whales as of July 2021, distributed in three pods off the coasts of Washington state and British Columbia, according to the federal Marine Mammal Commission. Southern resident numbers peaked in the mid-1990s at 96 to 98 whales after a national ban on their killing and capture for marine parks.

The Environmental Protection Agency cites loss of prey as one of the primary causes for the animals' decline, followed by pollution and disturbance from vessels.

Last December, U.S. Federal Magistrate Judge

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PHOTO BY CAROLEINE JAMES/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Brett Stillwaugh, the Alaska Trollers Association's representative in Wrangell, with his boat, the McKenna S., last Friday. He believes a shutdown of the Southeast troll fishery would be devastating.

## Filling a need



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Debbie and Phil Powers purchased downtown property, formerly Rooney's Roost, to run as a Suite Spot bed and breakfast in their semi-retirement.

## Losing 3 B&Bs reduces options for overnight travelers

By MARC LUTZ  
*Sentinel editor*

It's long been a challenge for travelers to find lodging in Wrangell, especially during the spring and summer months, but with the closure of three bed and breakfasts in the past six months, securing a place to stay has become even harder.

With the loss of those short-term-stay establishments, other tourist-related businesses are having trouble attracting clients to the island.

Little Bitty Getaway, Oceanside B&B and The

Squawking Raven B&B have all closed since last August. The reasons are various, ranging from retirement to the pandemic.

For Theresa Allen, who owned Oceanside B&B, operating a bed and breakfast got to be too much work, and she made the decision to close it at the beginning of the year.

"I like to go up the river a lot and take time off and travel," Allen said. "It's just me at my house. I don't have anyone to take care of (the

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## Shortage of crew continues to plague state ferry system

By LARRY PERSILY  
*Sentinel writer*

An ongoing shortage of crew is the "No. 1 risk factor" for the Alaska Marine Highway System, Transportation Department Deputy Commissioner Katherine Keith told legislators.

At a Feb. 2 presentation to the Senate Transportation Committee, the ferry system reported it was short just over 100 crew for full staffing to efficiently operate the winter schedule, about a 20% vacancy factor for onboard employees.

The ferry system, however, is able to run its schedule with crew members picking up extra shifts and overtime to cover the work, and with management denying leave requests, Keith said in an interview after the committee meeting.

Looking toward the busier summer schedule, the system wants to put the 3-year-old Hubbard into service in northern Southeast Alaska starting May 1, "if we can hire enough crew," Tony Karvelas, acting general manager of the Alaska Marine Highway System, told an annual gathering of Southeast community officials the day before the Senate committee hearing.

The 280-foot-long, \$60 million Hubbard has never gone to work since it left the shipyard.

The state added crew quarters to the ferry last year, so that it could operate on longer runs that require a crew change.

Separate from the Hubbard, the Transportation Department has said it can manage the summer schedule, assuming a continuation of overtime and leave restrictions.

The system has been dealing with crew shortages the past two years, as budget cuts imposed in Gov. Mike Dunleavy's first year in office in 2019 and then weak traveler numbers during the worst of the pandemic in 2020 sliced deeply into schedules and staffing. Retirements and resignations far outpaced new hires.

The vacancies are spread among the deck, engine and passenger services departments, including junior engineers, oilers, porters, watchmen, able-bodied and ordinary seamen, Keith reported.

"We certainly want to run all the ships all the time," Matt McLaren, the ferry system's business development manager, told the Senate Transportation Committee. "That's certainly the goal. ... Our challenge the last couple of years has been finding enough crew to run all the ships."

Karvelas added a help-wanted plea to his comments at the Southeast Conference annual summit on Feb. 1: "Let your

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PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Scott Gile, of the Bay Co., drives a new four-wheeler ATV onto the Rainforest Islander on Feb. 8 for delivery to Banana Point on Mitkof Island for a customer in Petersburg.

## Cuts in ferry service lead to uptick in water taxi business

By MARC LUTZ  
*Sentinel editor*

It has been more than a month without state ferry service after the Kennicott last stopped in Wrangell on Jan. 11. Ferry service is scheduled to start again on Friday, with the Columbia pulling in on its northbound run.

In the month with no service, privately operated water taxis have been filling even more than before, responding to an increased need for passengers and cargo looking to get to Banana Point at the southern end of Mitkof Island, or all the way into Petersburg or to Coffman Cove and the road system on

Prince of Wales Island.

Not only have companies like Muddy Water Adventures and Breakaway Adventures filled the gap left by the state ferries, they've made it possible for stranded airline travelers to get between Wrangell and Petersburg.

Muddy Water owner Zach Taylor, who pilots a 21-passenger catamaran, said that's where most of his water taxi traffic has come from so far this year.

"It's the nature of travel in Southeast," he said. "The plane can't land if it's bad weather. I was able to help. I think I'm up to about 400 people we've moved over to Banana Point just

because they (Alaska Airlines) overhauled Petersburg and landed here and vice-versa."

It's about a 45-minute drive between Banana Point and the Petersburg airport.

Outside of stranded passengers, Taylor has transported student-athletes and coaches to Wrangell and Petersburg, a service that's made more sports competitions possible and more affordable than taking a flight.

"(Water taxis have) always been really important, even when the ferries are in full operation," said head wrestling coach Jack Carney, who has

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## Birthdays & Anniversaries

The Sentinel extends its best wishes to everyone listed in the chamber of commerce community birthday calendar.

**Wednesday, Feb. 15:** Caiden Scott.

**Thursday, Feb. 16:** None.

**Friday, Feb. 17:** Anniversary: Frank and Pat Warfel.

**Saturday, Feb. 18:** Jen Banks, Zach Steele, Tyler Torvend.

**Sunday, Feb. 19:** Kinsley Angerman, Einar R. Haaseth, Ryan Soeteber.

**Monday, Feb. 20:** Jodie Guggenbickler, Zach Lane, Mary Rooney, Melissa Wellons.

**Tuesday, Feb. 21:** Alexandra Kaer.

**Wednesday, Feb. 22:** Steve Angerman, George Norris, Merak Rooney.

## Senior Center Menu

Open for in-person dining. Must be fully vaccinated.

**Thursday, Feb. 16**

Closed for Elizabeth Peratrovich Day

**Friday, Feb. 17**

Pork chop suey, broccoli, danish salad, rice

**Monday, Feb. 20**

Turkey pot pie, sunshine salad, biscuit

**Tuesday, Feb. 21**

Chicken and dumplings, peas, spicy fruit cup

**Wednesday, Feb. 22**

Vegetable beef hash, tomato rockefeller, cauliflower broccoli toss, biscuit

Call the senior center at 907-874-2066 24 hours in advance to reserve a seat at lunch or to request delivery. The senior van is available to take seniors to medical appointments, errands such as collecting mail, getting prescriptions or other essential items.

## Ferry Schedule

### Northbound

**Friday, Feb. 17**  
Columbia, 6:45 p.m.

**Friday, Feb. 24**  
Columbia, 3:15 p.m.

**Friday, March 3**  
Columbia, 8:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, March 7**  
Columbia, 12:15 p.m.

### Southbound

**Monday, Feb. 20**  
Columbia, 6 a.m.

**Monday, Feb. 27**  
Columbia, 5:15 a.m.

**Monday, March 6**  
Columbia, 2:30 p.m.

**Friday, March 10**  
Columbia, 7:45 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times. Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or call 907-874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.

## Tides

### High Tides

### Low Tides

|         | AM    |      | PM    |      | AM    |      | PM    |      |
|---------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|
|         | Time  | Ft   | Time  | Ft   | Time  | Ft   | Time  | Ft   |
| Feb. 15 | 07:38 | 14.6 | 09:22 | 11.6 | 00:53 | 5.6  | 02:29 | 1.4  |
| Feb. 16 | 08:57 | 15.4 | 10:29 | 12.9 | 02:21 | 5.8  | 03:48 | 0.0  |
| Feb. 17 | 10:06 | 16.6 | 11:23 | 14.4 | 03:45 | 5.0  | 04:50 | -1.5 |
| Feb. 18 | 11:05 | 17.9 | ..... | ...  | 04:52 | 3.6  | 05:40 | -2.8 |
| Feb. 19 | 00:09 | 15.8 | 11:58 | 18.8 | 05:46 | 2.1  | 06:25 | -3.6 |
| Feb. 20 | 00:52 | 17.0 | 12:47 | 19.3 | 06:34 | 0.7  | 07:06 | -3.7 |
| Feb. 21 | 01:32 | 17.9 | 01:33 | 19.1 | 07:19 | -0.3 | 07:45 | -3.2 |

## Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

**STORY TIME AT THE LIBRARY**, 10 to 11 a.m. Fridays. Come enjoy the stories, crafts and snacks at the Irene Ingle Public Library. Call 907-874-3535.

**FREE TAX RETURN PREPARATION** every Saturday through April 15 at the Nolan Center. Sponsored by the AARP TaxAide Foundation. Open to everyone, regardless of age. IRS-certified volunteers will prepare and e-file your return for you at no charge. Refunds can be direct-deposited into your bank account. By appointment only. Call Paula at 907-874-3824 or 907-305-0309.

**NOLAN CENTER THEATER** "Knock at the Cabin," rated R, at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 17-18, and at 4 p.m. Sunday. The horror mystery thriller film runs 1 hour and 40 minutes, and tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

**PARKS and RECREATION** advisory board regular meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, in borough assembly chambers at City Hall. Agenda at <https://bit.ly/406gxpn>. The public is encouraged to attend.

**FAMILY GAME NIGHT**, 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 17, at The Salvation Army. Food, board games, video games. All are welcome. Call for more information at 907-874-3753.

**YOUTH ART**, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 18, for ages 10 to 16 at The Salvation Army. Bookmaking and scrapbooking. Participants will make a journal to take home and a mini magazine. Supplies will be provided, with a lunch break halfway through. Call for more information, 907-874-3753.

**WRANGELL SCHOOL BOARD** will meet at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20, via Zoom. Go to: <https://bit.ly/40sFhs0>. The meeting ID is 872 4384 1903 and the passcode is 115673. Community members can email comments to [kpowell@wpsd.us](mailto:kpowell@wpsd.us), or can sign up under guests to be heard at the meeting by emailing the same address before 3:30 p.m. the day of the meeting.

**HOSPICE** annual meeting will be at noon on Monday, Feb. 20, at the Catholic church parish hall. Everyone is welcome to learn about the group and what they do. A simple lunch will be provided.

**SWIMMING POOL** is closed for maintenance; reopening in March (pending no further setbacks). The weight room and cardio equipment will be open for continued use, although there will be one week where the entire facility is closed while carpet cleaning. The locker rooms will be off-limits when the tile floors are being grouted. For more information visit [www.wrangellrec.com](http://www.wrangellrec.com) or call 907-874-2444.

Want more attendance at your meeting or event? Send information for Roundup to [wrgsent@gmail.com](mailto:wrgsent@gmail.com) or call 907-874-2301.

## Continuing Events

**PARKS and RECREATION** [www.wrangellrec.com](http://www.wrangellrec.com)

**Weight room:** 6 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 - 7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 6 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 - 8:30 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Saturday

**AA Meetings:** North Star Group meets from 7 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays, St. Philip's Episcopal Church.

## The Way We Were In the Sentinel 100, 75, 50 and 25 years ago.

**Feb. 15, 1923**

A number of parents and invited guests attended the father-son and mother-daughter dinner at the gym last Monday evening, presented by the Wrangell Boy Scouts. The boys dartsed busily here and there, seeing to it that everyone was fed. Not a woman or a Girl Scout was permitted to help, and the entire credit for the success of the dinner rests on the Boy Scouts. Just before the gathering dispersed, Superintendent Gross made an announcement of interest to the community, and especially to the young men who comprise the high school basketball team. For some time, he said, he had been at work on a plan for an education trip to the states for the team, and this trip will be made soon. He plans to take the boys to several interesting manufacturing plants and to show them various other

things of interest while south.

**Feb. 13, 1948**

Mrs. M. O. Johnson, chairman of the Board of Control of Bishop Rose General Hospital, announced today that she expected the arrival of a permanent doctor for Wrangell early next month. Dr. John O. Bangeman, now practicing in Missoula, Montana, has been in communication with the board and said he would leave Missoula the last of February for Wrangell. Dr. Bangeman is no stranger to Alaska, having served with the Army at Fort Richardson. He comes to Wrangell highly recommended by Dr. Earl Albrecht, territorial health commissioner, who served with Dr. Bangeman in the Army.

**Feb. 16, 1973**

Wrangell and Sitka played two basketball games last week that could only be termed "unusual." Wrangell won the first 60-45. Sitka pulled to a 60-55 victory the second night. The scores are only half the story. First, Wrangell seemed to be jinxed and couldn't toss a ball through the hoop. Later the two teams engaged in so much physical contact that 62 fouls were recorded. In the initial contest, Wrangell hoopsters were unable to find the bucket until just before the end of the first quarter. "We went 22 straight shots before one went through," said Wolf Coach Carroll Merritt. The first quarter score was 14-5, Sitka. At the half Sitka led 26-19 but by the end of the third quar-

ter Wrangell had the lead 42-33 and went on to win. The second night, Sitka elected to play a physical game and Wrangell responded in kind. The contest turned into a melee, with 57 personal and five technical fouls, two players ejected for fighting and with Miles DeWitt going out with a broken right hand. "By the time the games were finished we had six players out on fouls, with injuries or ejected," Merritt said. "They got us mad and we lost. It's that simple."

**Feb. 12, 1998**

This weekend's Tent City Festival seemed well attended and the weather encouraged involvement from all ages in the events. Again this year the Coast Guard Cutter Anacapa, stationed in Petersburg, made a special trip to Wrangell for the crew to enjoy the activities as well as lend a great deal of help. A few years back the festival became a bit bedraggled and didn't evoke much inspiration for locals to dress up or play out. If not for the spirited energy of the young men off the Anacapa, the annual festival might very well have wilted for lack of attention. But these fine young men participated in everything from the fashion show, dressed in their sharp uniforms and escorting lovely ladies down the runway, to the bed races. They set an excellent example to Wrangellites of all ages by participating to such an extent. We now look forward each year to their arrival.

## Daylight Hours

| Date    | Sunrise | Sunset | Hours  |
|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| Feb. 15 | 7:15a   | 4:52p  | 09:36h |
| Feb. 16 | 7:13a   | 4:54p  | 09:40h |
| Feb. 17 | 7:11a   | 4:56p  | 09:45h |
| Feb. 18 | 7:08a   | 4:58p  | 09:49h |
| Feb. 19 | 7:06a   | 5:01p  | 09:54h |
| Feb. 20 | 7:04a   | 5:03p  | 09:59h |
| Feb. 21 | 7:01a   | 5:05p  | 10:03h |

# Energy-relief share of last year's PFD not subject to income tax

The Associated Press  
and Wrangell Sentinel

The IRS announced last Friday that most temporary relief checks issued by states in 2022 are not subject to federal income taxes, including the \$662 energy-relief portion of last year's \$3,284 Alaska Permanent Fund dividend.

Alaska legislators last year added the energy-relief money to the annual PFD of \$2,622 in a move to help residents hit hard by high prices for gasoline, diesel and heating fuel.

The IRS decision provides last-minute tax guidance as returns are starting to pour in.

The agency said it will not challenge the taxability of payments related to general welfare and disaster, meaning

taxpayers in 21 states who received such checks in 2022 won't have to pay federal taxes on the money.

The states handed out the payments to help residents cope with rising energy costs, inflation, lingering impacts of the pandemic and other financial strains.

"The IRS appreciates the patience of taxpayers, tax professionals, software companies and state tax administrators as the IRS and Treasury worked to resolve this unique and complex situation," the IRS said Friday evening in a statement.

In addition to Alaska, the states where the relief checks do not have to be reported by taxpayers are California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon,

Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

In addition, many taxpayers in Georgia, Massachusetts, South Carolina and Virginia also can avoid federal taxes on state payments if they meet certain requirements, the IRS said.

In California, most residents got a "middle class tax refund" last year, a payment of up to \$1,050 depending on their income, filing status and whether they had children. The state Legislature approved the payments to help offset record high gasoline prices, which peaked at a high of \$6.44 per gallon in June according to AAA.

A key question was whether the federal government would count those payments as income and require Californians to pay taxes on the money. Many California taxpayers had delayed filing

their returns while waiting for an answer.

Maine was another example of states where the IRS stance had created confusion. More than 100,000 tax returns already had been filed as of last Thursday, many of them submitted before the IRS urged residents to delay filing their returns.

Gov. Janet Mills pressed for the \$850 pandemic relief checks last year for most Maine residents to help make ends meet as a state budget surplus ballooned.

Her administration designed the relief program to conform with federal tax code to avoid being subject to federal taxes, said Sharon Huntley, spokesperson for the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services.

## Harbor Department surveyed public to strengthen federal grant application

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

The borough will use the results of an eight-day public survey of users of its downtown harbor floats to boost the competitiveness of its federal grant application to rebuild the facilities, which officials said are in desperate need of repair.

The survey closed Monday and it will take a while to tabulate the results, but officials believe it will help make the borough's case for as much as \$25 million in federal funds.

After completing an \$11.5 million repair project at Shoemaker Bay Harbor in 2019, the borough does not have the cash on hand to reconstruct the Wrangell Harbor Basin and is seeking federal grant funding. But the borough can't complete its grant application alone — it needs to provide data about the harbor's aging floats.

The borough's 11-question survey for harbor users was designed to determine how the facility's safety issues have affected community members, guests and their vessels. Even minor slips, scraps or electrical shocks at the harbor could help illustrate the necessity of the repair project.

"A lot of people don't report the small slips and falls if they don't get hurt," said Port and Harbors Director Steve Miller. "I'd be curious to see what we get out of the survey as well, so we have a better idea of what we can do down there in the interim."

The project would include the Inner Harbor along with Reliance, Standard Oil and sea-plane floats.

Many of the floats are about 50 years old, Miller said, and in desperate need of an update. Lighting on many of the floats is poor, their electrical grounding systems are in critical condition, their fire safety systems are not up to code and their gangways are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, according to a 2005 condition assessment.

"The electrical is over 35 years old and it's out of compliance," said Miller. "We can't even get parts for half of it. That's how old the floats are and that's why we're working hard to get money for them."

The borough is applying for two federal grants to cover the

project's design and build costs — the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant and the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) grant. Their deadlines are approaching rapidly, at the end of February and April, respectively.

In 2022, the borough applied for but was not awarded a RAISE grant for only the design and permitting phase of the harbor project. Community members wrote letters of support for the grant application, detailing the facility's importance to the community and the dangers posed by the aging facilities.

"We recognize that this harbor basin includes Wrangell's oldest dock and provides for nearly half of our total moorage capacity," wrote Capt. Dorianne Sprehe of the Volunteer Fire Department. "The docks themselves present with twisting, rotting and deteriorated areas which are not only hazards for those trying to access their vessels but for the fire and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) responders trying to provide aid. ... Additionally, the antiquated electrical system of the Inner Harbor presents many fire and electrical shock hazards to first responders, divers working in the area and vessel owners."

The borough has adjusted its approach to applications since missing out on the 2022 round of RAISE grants. After learning that design-and-build projects are more likely to receive awards than design-only projects, borough officials "changed up (their) strategy to go for the entire project," said Borough Manager Jeff Good. "It definitely helps with the additional money that's out there right now, but they are really competitive grants," he added.

The estimated cost for the full rebuild is just over \$26 million, more than twice as much as the Shoemaker project. Inflation, combined with the extensive scope of work required for harbor basin floats, has driven up the price. "(Inflation) is a huge deal right now," said Miller. "It was a 20% increase over what we had expected a couple years ago."

## Kautz retires from helm of the Marine after 43 years

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

When the recently retired Patty Kautz signed her restaurant, Hungry Beaver Pizza and Marine Bar, over to Roland Wimberley on Feb. 4, it was exactly 43 years to the day since she first leased the establishment in 1981. "I could not believe it," she said. "It was pretty comical."

Though Kautz looks back fondly on her quadragenarian run as owner of Wrangell's oldest pizza parlor, she looks forward with excitement to a retirement full of travel and family time.

"There's been a lot of changes in 43 years," Kautz said. When she first signed the lease, the building was unfinished, with sheetrock on the walls where the restaurant is now. The space underwent a complete remodel before welcoming its first customers.

But Kautz didn't just overhaul the establishment's structure — she overhauled the menu, too. For the first couple years after opening, Hungry Beaver was a steak and seafood spot. Then, around 1983, Kautz brought pizza to Wrangell, where it has become a community staple in the intervening years. When she tried to close the restaurant down due to a staffing shortage in 2021, devoted patrons banded together and convinced her to reopen. "You talked us into it," she wrote in a Facebook post.

Countless other improvements followed. Kautz and local artist Kitty Angerman came up with the idea for the restaurant's personalized ceiling tiles, which range from vast mountain scenes and seascapes to detailed renderings

of ships and sea creatures to adorable doodles and bright business logos. The project started around 1985. Community members "take a tile and paint whatever they want on it and bring it down and put it up," said Kautz. "A lot of people paint their own. Kitty Angerman did probably 50% of them."

Before buying the pizza parlor and bar, Kautz had nearly two decades worth of experience in the restaurant business. "At 16, I started washing dishes and making salads," she said in a previous Sentinel interview. "Then they didn't have a waitress one day and I started waitressing. Then, they didn't have a bartender when I turned 21, so I started bartending. It just progressed from there."

But for now, Kautz isn't overly nostalgic about her many years at the Marine. Instead, she's looking forward to her future. After her upcoming hip replacement is complete, she plans to travel the world with her husband, starting with a train tour across the nation. In addition to her stacked travel agenda (after the train trip is complete, her next destination is "everywhere"), she is looking forward to "having company without interruptions" during her retirement years.

On Feb. 4, Kautz hosted a retirement party of more than 50 well-wishers at the Hungry Beaver. She, her husband and her daughter catered the event by themselves, for old times' sake. "We used to do big buffets for the fishermen," she recalled. "And we would have another one when the fishing season was over. I used to stand on the bar and we used to auction off donations for

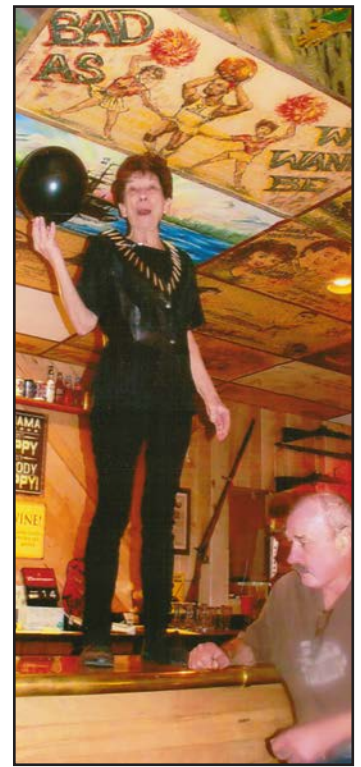


PHOTO COURTESY  
PATTY KAUTZ

Patty Kautz has a lot of memories from running the Marine Bar the past 43 years, including conducting an auction in 2004, when she put prizes inside balloons and patrons would bid without knowing what they would get. Her husband, Bruce, sat in support as she ran the auction standing on the bar.

Toys for Tots."

The menu — which included barbecued pork, hot wings, potato salad, shrimp dip, cream puffs, hot beans, smoked salmon sandwiches and more — required three days of preparation.

"It was a good night," she said. She left town for surgery last Saturday.

## MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR CHRISTINE JENKINS

Sunday, Feb. 19, 1 p.m.  
at St. Philip's  
Episcopal Church

Graveside service  
immediately following

Celebration of life reception  
will follow at 2:30 p.m. at the  
Nolan Center.



### Correction

The Sentinel misspelled Einar Haaseth's last name in the Feb. 8 news story about Southeast Alaska Vietnam-era veterans and their quest for federal entitlement lands.

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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

### Stop calling it a dividend, maybe stop paying taxes

BY LARRY PERSILY  
Publisher

There might be a way to avoid federal income taxes on the Alaska Permanent Fund dividend. But it would mean admitting that the annual payment to Alaskans is a political decision not at all tied to earnings of the savings account.

It could mean changing the name of the PFD to Popular Fall Distribution, to truly disassociate the money from the fund's investment earnings. If it means avoiding federal income tax on the money, we could learn to call the annual payment most anything.

It would mean changing state law.

And it would mean discarding the cynical belief that Alaskans only care about the Permanent Fund because they get a slice of the earnings every fall.

Regardless of the name, we would still want and need to love the Permanent Fund since it provides the largest single source of consistent revenue for public services. That would not change.

Don't think of it as a full divorce from the dividend, just think of it as cohabitation without the legal encumbrances.

The possibility of a tax-free PFD struck me after reading last week's IRS announcement that "general welfare" payments handed out by 21 states in 2022 are not considered taxable income. Those payments were intended to help ease the financial stress of high energy prices, painfully high inflation, the lingering effects of the pandemic, essentially most anything that helped residents get by in life.

No needs-based test to get the money in the 21 states. It went to everyone, thus the cash fit under the IRS use of the general welfare doctrine.

It's the same reason why the billions of dollars in federal pandemic relief payments to individuals in 2020 and 2021 were not

taxed. Everyone received the money to help with their general welfare. Who says the tax code is cold and cruel.

In Alaska, the IRS said the \$662 slice of last fall's \$3,284 dividend is not taxable, since it was designated by the Legislature as energy relief, whereas the \$2,622 dividend portion is taxable since it is intended as each Alaskan's share of the fund's investment earnings.

So why not take the hint from the federal tax office and change state law to make the entire fall bonus tax-free? Figuring the average Alaskan is in a 20% tax bracket, that could mean around a quarter-billion dollars

a year that would stay in Alaskans' pockets instead of going to the federal treasury under a \$2,000 PFD.

The Journal of Accountancy — perfect bedtime reading for people who can't sleep — describes it this way: "The IRS has consistently concluded that payments to individuals by government units, under legislatively provided social benefit programs, for the promotion of the general welfare, are not includible in a recipient's gross income."

The Alaska Supreme Court in 2017 ruled that the amount of the PFD is nothing special

under the law, merely a distribution of state general fund dollars and subject to the same legislative appropriation process as any other budget item, such as schools or troopers or road repairs.

Sure sounds like that could meet the IRS test of a government payment with a social benefit and for the promotion of general welfare. All we need to do is change the law to admit that the PFD is a state program intended to benefit Alaskans, unrelated to what the Permanent Fund may earn on its stocks, bonds, real estate and other investments that year, and subject to the annual political appropriation process.

It's not really that hard to admit the truth.

**"The IRS has consistently concluded that payments to individuals by government units, under legislatively provided social benefit programs, for the promotion of the general welfare, are not includible in a recipient's gross income."**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Wrangell should be proud of entire staff at long-term care

My mom, Marlene Clarke, was a long-term care resident at SEARHC in Wrangell from August 2022 until her recent passing on Feb. 7.

I was so impressed by the skilled and compassionate care that she received from the nurses, nursing assistants and doctors. She never wanted to go to the long-term care unit, but in my opinion she received the best care of any nursing home anywhere.

I have worked as a registered nurse in Oregon for 32 years. I originally trained as a nursing assistant at Wrangell Medical Center in high school in the early 1970s. At that time, the city owned and operated the hospital and long-term care. Even then, the care was exceptional. My grandma, Nellie Brooks, passed away there in 2022.

I think it is a testament to the caring, small community of

Wrangell, where people look out for each other. It is a great community to grow up in and raise a family. It brings out the best in people. What I heard from many nursing staff travelers is that it's the people of Wrangell who make them want to come back again and again.

SEARHC has built a beautiful facility and should be recognized for attracting high-quality nursing staff and physicians and their willingness to bring in travelers to keep staffing levels high.

Wrangell should be very proud to have such high-quality care. There are nursing shortages all over the United States, especially in rural small towns.

Thank you to all the staff at long-term care, especially the nurses, nursing assistants and physicians.

*Dianne Cassidy*

### Hospice will award 'hearts' at annual meeting Monday

Each year, Hospice of

Wrangell recognizes with "Hospice Hearts" those who have provided special assistance to the group. These will be awarded at the group's annual meeting Monday, Feb. 20.

Our hearts this year go to: Nettie Covalt, Anne Morrison, Michael Bania, Maria Byford, Bonnie Demerjian, Bill Rohrer, Donna Rohrer, Artha Deruyter, Kathy Watkins, Gary Watkins, Jim Bailey, Duke Mitchell and Loretta Rice.

Special thanks go to the folks at the Nolan Center: Cyni Crary, Tyler Eagle and Michael Bahleda, to Cathy Gross, and to all the ladies of the Stikine Stitches for their support. We also recognize the valuable assistance provided by Kathryn Winslow and Angie DelMoral, staff of the Braveheart volunteer program in Sitka.

And, of course, we appreciate the support of the Wrangell community.

*Hospice of Wrangell*

## EDITORIAL

### Not a good sign for Alaska's future

Fewer Alaska high school graduates are qualifying for the state's largest scholarship program; fewer who would qualify are bothering to participate in the program which requires that they attend college in Alaska; and more students who attend college out of state are choosing to set up their life outside Alaska.

The numbers are not encouraging, unless you run a college in the Lower 48 that wants to attract more Alaskans.

While elected officials debate the amount of the annual Permanent Fund dividend, who is tougher on crime, who is more supportive of resource development and which party is a stronger defender of the state's rights against the federal government, our students and the university system suffer. And the future looks worse.

The Alaska Department of Labor has been tracking graduates of the high school classes of 2005, and released its most recent report last month. Of the graduates who earned two- or four-year college degrees in Alaska, 55% were still in the state in 2021, according to the findings. But for those who earned their degrees outside of Alaska, only 25% were living in the state by 2021, according to the report.

Which indicates we need to keep more Alaska high school graduates in the state — once they leave, they are more likely not to return. That's a bad statistic for a state that has lost more residents than it has gained 10 years running.

Yet the vast majority of high school students eligible for the Alaska Performance Scholarship, which requires them to study in-state, are choosing to go Outside, according to a report from the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education.

About \$100 million has been distributed to more than 29,000 students under the scholarship, which was created in 2011 to encourage high school students to excel and stay in the state. Recipients can use the money to study at the University of Alaska or elsewhere in the state, including the Alaska Vocational Technical Center.

But even with the offer of scholarships, fewer students are choosing to sign up. The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education report found a record-low 22% of eligible students chose to use the scholarship in 2022, dropping from a high of 39% in 2016.

The commission found budget cuts to the University of Alaska — largely imposed during Gov. Mike Dunleavy's first year in office in 2019 — had made it less attractive for students to enroll at the school. As if uncertainty over degree and course offerings were not enough of a turn-off, a budget decision by the governor in 2019 jeopardized the scholarship funding itself, until the Legislature established a new, secure scholarship account last year.

Adding to the problem, the number of students even eligible for the scholarship has been in decline. A record-low 17% of graduating Alaska students were academically eligible for the award last year — half of what it was in 2014.

No doubt Alaska students can do better to qualify for the scholarships, but the state — its elected leaders and residents — also must do better with funding and committed support to our schools and the university system. Otherwise, the outmigration from Alaska will get worse.

*— Wrangell Sentinel*

## REFLECTIONS

### St. Valentine's Day a reminder of God's love

February is the month when we turn our thoughts to matters of the heart. On the 14th we give our sweetheart a card, a box of candy or maybe take them out to dinner. No matter what is done we think of love to our wife, husband, girlfriend or boyfriend.

Saint Valentine was a third-century Roman saint and was commemorated on the 14th of February. Yes, we still celebrate the event to this day.

In the course of history there is an even greater event to show

love. God sent his only son to show us just how much we are loved. That love was told to us by his worldly travels and his death on a cross. We as his children are only asked to welcome him into our hearts.

At this time in our calendar year let all of us turn our hearts not only to the ones we love but to the one who loves us unconditionally. God loves all of us, and all that is asked is acceptance.

*Don McConachie*

*St. Philip's Episcopal Church*

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# Troller lawsuit

Continued from page 1

Michelle Peterson recommended the U.S. District Court in Washington state shut down the summer and winter seasons of the Southeast Alaska chinook troll fishery until overfishing concerns could be addressed.

The decision is now before U.S. District Court Judge Richard Jones, with a verdict expected in the coming months. "We're just sitting here, waiting for a judge," said Brett Stillwaugh, the Alaska Trollers Association's representative in Wrangell.

If the judge rules in favor of the Wild Fish Conservancy, Gov. Mike Dunleavy has said the state will appeal the court ruling. The Alaska Trollers Association is also an intervenor in the case, defending the fishery.

Even a temporary shutdown of Southeast fisheries could have a substantial impact on the area's economy. "If we appeal, it'll potentially be shut down for two years if the appeal is successful," said Stillwaugh. "Two years away - that pretty much destroys much of the markets that have been built up for the product. It's a big economic problem."

More than 1,000 power trollers, largely independent fishing families operating small vessels, rely on the Southeast troll catch for much of their livelihoods. There are more than 40 salmon power troll state permit holders in Wrangell, with more holding hand troll permits.

"I was here in the mid-90s when the logging industry went down," said Stillwaugh. "It devastated the economy." He anticipates that a fishery shutdown would have similarly devastating impacts. "I'm not sure where we would go from there," he said. "Myself, personally speaking ... if this comes down, I'm probably going to have to move away and go find work somewhere else. ... A lot of families here, I don't know what they'd do."

Hans Radtke, a consulting economist in Oregon who focuses on fisheries, estimated that the Southeast commercial troll salmon fishery generated an average annual harvest income of around \$28.8 million between 2017

and 2019 in his expert testimony in court on the behalf of the conservancy.

NOAA has admitted that Southeast chinook harvest levels have been unsustainable for the past 10 years, said WFC Executive Director Emma Helverson, and mitigation efforts have been insufficient. "Unfortunately, we're at this point now where (southern resident killer whales) are very credibly on a path to extinction. With the acknowledgement (from NOAA) so clear that this harm was occurring, we felt we had no other option" than to seek a legal remedy, she said.

"There is a point in a population ... where recovery is not possible," she continued. "Are we OK losing this species? If we continue harvesting at these levels, these chinook populations may go extinct, which are the populations these fisheries depend on."

Amy Daugherty, executive director of the Alaska Trollers Association, contends that the Wild Fish Conservancy's suit is a "categorically illogical" political move that would destroy trollers' livelihoods while providing no appreciable benefit to southern resident killer whales or chinook. "They have real toxicity issues in the Puget Sound," she said. "They have all kinds of vessel disturbance."

She claims that a shutdown would bring only 400 additional fish to the Puget Sound annually and that "every other population of orcas up and down the coast is thriving."

Members of the Trollers Association also point to fisheries in Canada and on the Puget Sound as culprits for the declining abundance of chinook. "That's just ridiculous to destroy our economy and they're still going strong," said Stillwaugh.

Michael Weiss, of the Center for Whale Research, an organization that studies southern residents and is not associated with the Wild Fish Conservancy, claims that while loss of prey is the primary factor driving the whales' population decline, it's difficult to pin the problem on any particular fishery.

When food is plentiful, killer whales store toxins in their blubber, meaning that pollution is a much more

significant issue when whales are underfed to begin with. The same goes for human disturbance, which makes it difficult for whales to forage. "If there's more fish to find, disturbance is less of a problem," Weiss said. Other orca populations in the area may be doing better, but they eat seals, not chinook. "It does seem like it comes down to the prey issue."

That said, "we definitely don't have the evidence to lay the blame for their lack of food at the feet of Southeast Alaska trollers," he added, citing dams and habitat destruction as other factors impacting chinook populations in the Pacific Northwest. But he believes Southeast fisheries management should be changed to focus on individual stocks rather than the "antiquated" aggregate abundance measure.

"It really should be managed in a way that reflects that the fish that could be taken are potential southern resident prey," he said. "Certainly, some kind of change would probably be good."

Helverson of the WFC believes that fisheries managers, not Southeast Alaska trollers, are to blame and hopes that the government will provide trollers with financial aid if the lawsuit succeeds. "We believe that the government failed these fishers and has a responsibility to ensure that their livelihoods are not put at risk because of this poor management decision," she said.

In recent weeks, the Alaska Trollers Association has appealed to a variety of municipal governments and organizations seeking funds for its legal defense. The Ketchikan Gateway Borough assembly is considering a \$25,000 contribution and the Sitka assembly is also considering a \$25,000 contribution, in addition to a previous \$5,000. The Sitka-based Seafood Producers Cooperative donated \$59,000. The Petersburg assembly donated \$2,500 in June 2020 and approved an official message of support on Feb. 6.

Stillwaugh plans to meet with Borough Manager Jeff Good to request \$7,500 from the Wrangell borough. The issue will likely appear before the assembly in the coming weeks.

# Ferry system

Continued from page 1

families and friends know."

The state continues to advertise nationwide for job applicants.

Though ridership crashed during the worst of the pandemic and even before that as budget cuts and vessel breakdowns added uncertainty to the schedule, passenger and vehicle traffic aboard the ferries has been on a downward march since the early 1990s, according to data presented to the Senate committee.

From a peak of 372,000 Southeast passengers in 1992, traffic plunged to 152,000 in 2019 as

rising ticket prices, reliability issues and changing traveler preferences took a toll. COVID-19 travel restrictions dropped the numbers even further, down to 44,000 in 2020.

The passenger count for 2022 is not final yet, but it looks still to be below 2019 traffic.

Vehicle numbers dropped from 97,000 cars, trucks and RVs in 1992 to 58,000 in 2019.

"The system is facing tremendous challenges that need to be addressed," Transportation Committee Chairman Sen. James Kaufman said. "The overall trend is downward."

The state ferries "once were a very fun way for people to travel across our state," Keith acknowledged, pledging that the department has embarked on a multi-part effort to improve reliability and customer service.

The governor's proposed budget, which legislators are just starting to review, shows fewer port calls in the fiscal year 2024 spending plan than this year. That is because many of the ships will be going out of service for repairs, upgrades or overhauls, McLaren told the committee.

The fleet's largest vessel, the Columbia, is back on the

schedule for this summer after a three-year absence for repairs and to save money. But the Columbia later this year could go back into the shipyard for replacement of its controllable pitch propeller system, and the fleet's second-largest ship, the Matanuska, is out of service for an unknown amount of time as the department decides whether to spend millions of dollars to replace wasted steel and make other repairs and upgrades.

The state needs to decide what makes sense for the 60-year-old ship long term, Transportation Department Commissioner

Ryan Anderson told the Southeast Conference.

Alaska will receive about \$285 million in federal aid over the next few years to help pay for modernization of the fleet, pay for replacement for the Tustumena, which serves Gulf of Alaska communities, repairs to several ferry docks and other expenses, including improving service to rural communities.

Spending decisions for the federal money, which was added to the budget by Alaska's senior U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, will be up to the Legislature and governor.

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# Wrangell varsity boys fare better in rematch against Sitka

By MARC LUTZ  
Sentinel editor

The last time they met on the hardwood, the Wrangell High School boys varsity basketball team fell in two games against the Sitka team on Sitka's homecourt.

"Our guys played really tough," head coach Cody Angerman said after those games in December. "I would love to play this Sitka team again when we get Ethan (Blatchley) back."

And play the higher-division team again they did on Feb. 5 and 6, splitting the two games.

Originally, the Haines team was supposed to come to Wrangell to play but

those plans fell through. At that time, Angerman said they reached out to some other teams to see if they would be available to come play. Sitka affirmed they could, which led to last week's matchup.

This time, the Wrangell Wolves were more prepared for the Sitka Wolves and made it hard for the visiting team to gain points.

In the first period of the Feb. 5 game, it looked like Sitka might pull ahead early, leading by five points by the buzzer, 12-7. However, Wrangell rebounded, caught up and passed Sitka to end the second period ahead, 25-24. The home team kept up the heat and the third period ended 36-33 in favor of Wrangell. However, the lead wouldn't last as Sitka caught up and

overtook Wrangell, winning the game 48-42.

"Our mentality is that we can compete against anyone, and our sights are set on the (Division) 2A teams," Angerman said. "I'm just happy that the guys played really hard both nights and can understand what can come out of playing good defense."

That's just what Wrangell did the second night of play. Although Sitka led by five points once again at the end of the first period, Wrangell wouldn't allow them to score at all in the second period, surging forward with their own baskets. By the end of the second period, Wrangell had added 13 points to the board, leading 18-10.

Wrangell kept up the defense throughout the rest of the game while continuing to work hard on its offense. The third period ended with Wrangell ahead, 27-16. Sitka began to catch up in the fourth period, but Wrangell was able to hold them off, eventually winning the game 34-29.

Last weekend was a bye week for Wrangell, giving the teams a chance to rest up before scheduled travel to take on Metlakatla on that teams' homecourt.

Boys and girls varsity teams will have a chance for a rematch against the Chiefs and Miss Chiefs, who came to Wrangell at the end of January.

Wrangell was scheduled to attend the Stikine Hardwood Classic in Petersburg, but those plans were canceled.

## Closing B&Bs

Continued from page 1

B&B, which is downstairs) and turn it over. Plus, I have grandkids now and the noise transfers from upstairs to downstairs and I didn't want to worry about that anymore."

Instead of leaving the space vacant, Allen converted it to a long-term rental, which her daughter now lives in. The switch made sense to Allen due to the tight housing market in Wrangell. Allen estimates that she served about 100 guests with the one-bedroom apartment featuring a sauna in the three years she operated as a B&B.

If her daughter moves out, Allen said she would consider changing back to a B&B or keep it as a long-term rental, especially with organizations like SEARHC needing lodging for contract workers, especially during the winter months.

Christie Jamieson decided to close The Squawking Raven B&B after more than eight years in business when the COVID-19 pandemic made her reevaluate what she was doing. She co-owned the business with her husband.

"I did all the cooking and cleaning and everything myself," Jamieson said. "We really had a good run of it. I know that when COVID hit in 2020, I didn't open it that season. It was too risky health-wise and there were too many restrictions."

She reopened after restrictions had been lifted but a diminished number of clients was one of the reasons she decided to close permanently last August. "To tell you the truth, I fell out of love with managing a B&B," Jamieson said. She also started working for the Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission, where she's focused her attention.

During the years that they operated The Squawking Raven, the Jamiesons occupied the upstairs portion of the house, which they had converted to an apartment. The downstairs was the B&B, with two full bedrooms, a washer and dryer and one-and-a-half bathrooms. They catered to honeymooners and wedding parties.

Itty Bitty Getaway opened in 2016 on Church Street. The one-bedroom, one-bathroom house could accommodate up to four people. A post in the Wrangell Community Group Facebook page in January from someone who had reservations for this year's Fourth of July festivities said the B&B was going off the rental market and had canceled her reservations, leaving them scrambling to find new accommodations.

The Sentinel was unable to reach the owners of Itty Bitty.

It's a struggle that Brenda Schwartz-Yeager is all too familiar with.

She owns Alaska Charters and Adventures, offering jet boat tours which has a lot of independent travelers who come to town for several days during tourist season. Those independent travelers infuse a lot more money into the Wrangell economy than cruise ship passengers she said, because they're typically in town for more than just a day and they need lodging, food and other amenities.

"The cruise ship travelers, I'm not saying they don't have an impact, they do, but it's a fraction of what independent travelers are spending," Schwartz-Yeager said, adding that there are anywhere from 100 to 150 independent travelers in Wrangell on any given day during tourism season. "Cruise ships are maybe a quarter of my business. Right now, I'm having people call me and they want to come to Wrangell and spend five days, go fishing, go up to Anan, and they cannot find a place to stay. Accommodations are already maxed out. Those are dollars that aren't coming into me and the other businesses."

Lodging was so tight last year, she said, that she had clients rent camping gear from her just so they could come to Wrangell and have a place to stay. "Short of putting them on my couch, there was nowhere to put them."

Still, there are several lodging options available to travelers, if they can make

reservations soon enough, such as the Stikine Inn, Wrangell Extended Stay, Grand View B&B, Reeve's Guest House and others, like the recently opened Cedar House Inn.

One B&B that closed during the pandemic was Rooney's Roost on the corner of Church and McKinnon streets. However, that property recently sold to Debbie and Phil Powers, who've lived in Colorado the past 40 years. They've reopened the location as A Suite Spot B&B, which will be able to accommodate up to 13 people when all the rooms are available. A couple rooms are still being fixed up and aren't rentable just yet.

The Powers made the purchase as part of their retirement plan. "We were looking for some way ... to have some extra income (in retirement)," Debbie Powers said. She said they had checked out Wrangell and noticed the need for lodging. In the off-season months, she said they are considering offering extended-stay rentals.

Schwartz-Yeager said she can understand why some B&B owners would choose to close, but the news of A Suite Spot opening was good to hear.

"That is huge though. That's five more couples that can come here and stay, then that experience spreads when they go home (and talk about their trip)," she said, enticing others to come to Wrangell.

## Water taxis

Continued from page 1

used the service to take his middle school grapplers over to Petersburg. "They tailor to

our specific needs. Sometimes they'll go over to Petersburg and hang out with us."

Carney said to take a flight would be three times the cost

of hiring a water taxi. Though a water taxi takes a little under an hour to get to Banana Point from Wrangell, there is no waiting on the tarmac or slow lines

to get through security.

People aren't the only ones making the cross-channel trip using Wrangell-based boats.

"I took someone's cat to Banana Point the other day," Taylor said. "I brought some batteries back for somebody else. I brought a jug of oil for somebody at the Bay Co. A kid from Petersburg was in Coffman Cove, so I picked him up in Coffman Cove, handed him the jug of oil, and he took it to his dad in Petersburg after the Bay Co. gave it to me the day before."

Though Eric Yancey, who pilots the Rainforest Islander landing craft will transport people, the majority of his load is vehicles. Last Wednesday, a truck, a Jeep, a four-wheeler ATV and a boat and trailer were loaded aboard Yancey's vessel for a run to Banana Point. He doesn't make regularly scheduled runs but provides the service when the need arises, which has been more as of late.

"I think there kind of is (an uptick) because of the state ferry service," Yancey said. "With their lack of service, for sure." The Rainforest Islander can carry 28 passengers and four to seven vehicles, depending on their size. And the cost to Coffman Cove, Banana Point or Petersburg can be more cost-efficient, he said, with more things

being transported since it's a direct route.

On last Wednesday's haul, Yancey was delivering the boat and trailer and four-wheeler for the Bay Co.

"We're delivering freight for guys over in Petersburg," said Scott Gile, who works for the Bay Co. "We'd be in a world of hurt without stuff like this."

The service is also something Gile is personally thankful for as he takes his truck over to Zarembo Island a couple of times a year using Yancey's service.

"(Without this service) everybody would be waiting for the (state) ferry or paying up the butt for the barge line," Gile said. "The cost is going up every year, seems like."

Come the summer and tourist season, Taylor said water taxi services will need to coordinate along with Anan Wildlife Observatory and LeConte Glacier trips, but more business, he said, is a "good problem to have."

But, he added, the state ferry system is still necessary to the way of life in Southeast.

"I think we do need the ferry system, but if it continues on the way it is, I think it will get busier (for local service providers)," Taylor said. "I think we'll get busier if the ferry continues its decline."

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# Alaskans celebrate Native civil rights advocate Elizabeth Peratrovich

BY CAROLEINE JAMES  
Wrangell Sentinel

On Thursday, Alaskans will celebrate Elizabeth Peratrovich Day to honor the Tlingit civil rights advocate who pushed for the nation's first anti-discrimination law, 19 years before the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. During her lifelong campaign for Native rights, she fought segregation and a majority white territorial Legislature to establish a foundation of legal protections that have benefitted Alaskans since 1945.

Peratrovich was born in segregated Petersburg on July 4, 1911. She was a member of the Tlingit Raven moiety and Lukaxádi clan. After her parents placed her in the care of The Salvation Army, she was adopted by Mary Wanamaker, a basketweaver, and Andrew Wanamaker, a Presbyterian minister and member of the Alaska Native Brotherhood. She grew up living a subsistence lifestyle in Sitka, then Klawock, then Ketchikan.

Evidence of anti-Native discrimination was commonplace during Peratrovich's youth. Whites barred Tlingit people from attending white-

owned schools and entering white-owned businesses. Signs reading "No Natives or Dogs Allowed," and "We Cater to White Trade Only" were posted throughout the small island towns, according to "Fighter in Velvet Gloves," a biography cowritten by her eldest son, Roy Peratrovich Jr.

She attended Ketchikan High School, one of a few integrated institutions in the area thanks to a successful 1929 lawsuit by a Tlingit leader. After school, she returned to Klawock and married Roy Peratrovich in 1931. He was a policeman and postmaster who would later become Klawock's mayor and grand president of the Alaska Native Brotherhood.

In late 1941, Peratrovich saw a "No Natives Allowed" notice at a hotel in Douglas, a community across Gastineau Channel from downtown Juneau. The United States had just entered World War II and many Alaska Native men had volunteered to serve the country. "The proprietor of Douglas Inn does not seem to realize that our Native boys are just as willing as the white boys to lay down their lives to protect the freedom that he enjoys," the Peratrovichs wrote to territorial



PHOTO BY AMY LOU BLOOD, OF ORDWAY'S; COURTESY ALASKA STATE LIBRARY - HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

Alaska Territorial Gov. Ernest Gruening (seated) signs the anti-discrimination act on Feb. 16, 1945, in Juneau, as Elizabeth Peratrovich stands by, along with (from left) Sen. O. D. Cochran, Rep. Edward Anderson, Sen. Norman Walker and her husband, Roy Peratrovich.

Gov. Ernest Gruening. The letter marked the beginning of her campaign for equal rights legislation.

The family moved to Juneau so that they could be more involved in territorial politics and Peratrovich was elected grand president of the Alaska Native Sisterhood. She traveled around Alaska, urging residents to support an anti-discrimination bill that would put an end to state-sanctioned segregation.

In 1943, the bill was introduced to the all-white territorial Legislature and failed on a tie vote. It was reintroduced in 1945, when the legislature had two Alaska Native members. Sen. Allen Shattuck contended that the bill would "aggravate rather than allay" racial conflict, according to Gruening's autobiography.

"Who are these people, barely out of savagery, who want to associate with us whites with

5,000 years of recorded civilization behind us?" Shattuck asked.

Peratrovich put down her knitting needles — she frequently knitted during legislative sessions — and responded in public testimony "I would not have expected that I, who am barely out of savagery, would have to remind the gentlemen with 5,000 years of recorded civilization behind them of our Bill of Rights."

According to the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame, senators asked Peratrovich whether an equal rights bill could actually eliminate racial discrimination. She responded: "Have you eliminated larceny or murder by passing a law against it? No law will eliminate crimes, but at least you as legislators can assert to the world that you recognize the evil of the present situation and speak your intent to help us overcome discrimination."

Her testimony turned the tide of the session and hushed hostile senators to a "defensive whisper," according to The Daily Alaska Empire. The Anti-Discrimination Act passed, 11-5.

Peratrovich died of breast cancer at age 47 on Dec. 1, 1958.

In 1988, Alaska Gov. Steve Cowper signed legislation naming Elizabeth Peratrovich Day a state holiday to honor her contributions to the anti-discrimination effort. She is buried in the Evergreen Cemetery in Juneau, next to her husband.

## Tlingit and Haida offers start-up grants for new business owners

BY CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

Tribal citizens with new business ideas may be eligible for funds to help launch their small businesses through the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska's start-up grant program.

Tlingit and Haida has been operating pandemic relief programs for existing small businesses run by tribal citizens for three years. In 2021, they added the federally funded small business relief start-up grant program to their list of offerings to support citizens who do not yet have a small business, but would like to develop one. This year is the second round of applications.

"We saw last year that there were a lot of people saying, 'I want to start my business,'" said Myrna Garbner, who coordinates the grant program. "But unfortunately with high costs, inflation, gasoline and food, people have been struggling and are just barely able to cover rent, utilities, heating, etcetera. We felt like this could be a way to help people jump-start and get their careers going," she continued.

The application deadline is Dec. 29, but funds will be awarded on a rolling basis, so early applicants will have priority. "We budgeted for 200 awards," said Garbner. "So when we give out 200, that's it for the year."

The maximum award is \$2,500 and most applicants receive the full award. To comply with federal law, the funds can only be used for business start-up expenses or for products to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, according to the Tlingit and Haida website.

Tribal citizens who previously received a Rescue Small Business grant from Tlingit and Haida are not eligible to apply.

Applicants must be tribal citizens who have opened or plan to open their small business in 2023. They must also take an online business course through Juneau-based small business development program Spruce Root before submitting their application. The course is self-paced, with recorded speakers, demonstrations, online modules and a certificate upon completion.

Students leave the course with a business plan and financial model that they can submit to Tlingit and Haida. Registration is free for the first 20 business course attendees — after that, it costs \$25. Applying for a small business start-up grant through Tlingit and Haida is free.

Information is available on the Tlingit and Haida website and applications are open online at [prod.tribald.com/cctforms/9/](http://prod.tribald.com/cctforms/9/)



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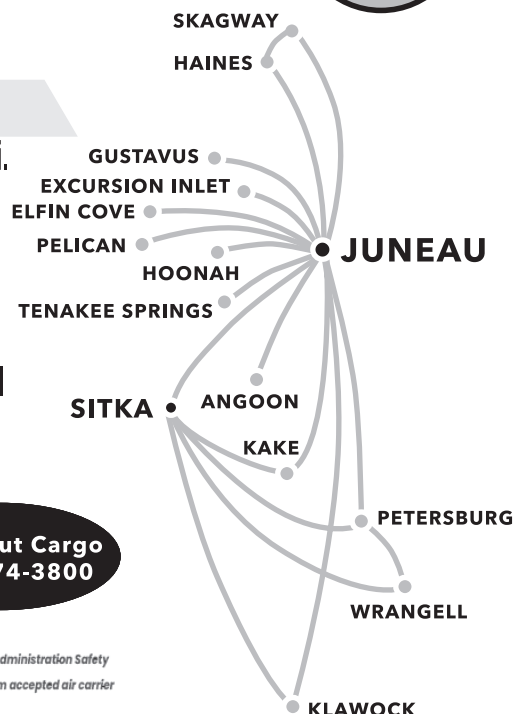
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# High/middle school principal retires after first year on the job

By MARC LUTZ  
Sentinel editor

After only one school year, Bob Burkhart is retiring as the principal of Wrangell High School and Stikine Middle School.

Burkhart relocated from Ennis, Montana, last year to take the job, coming from a position as a principal at a school in Missoula, Montana, which he took on after being retired the first time.

"He just decided not to sign an additional year contract and will continue as principal through the end of this year's contract," said Schools Superintendent Bill Burr. "He is looking to retire with his wife in Montana where they have spent many years in the past."

Burkhart said he will spend time hunting, gardening, making improvements to his home and supporting his grandchildren in their academic and athletic pursuits. He was grateful for his time in Wrangell.

"I've really appreciated the independent thinking and

confidence expressed by the students in our school," Burkhart said. "Our instructors deserve a huge amount of credit for harnessing the strengths of their students and assisting them in obtaining important goals in their lives."

Burkhart was also appreciative of the maintenance and custodial staff for keeping the school buildings in "such good condition after so many years of service to our students."

The search to replace Burkhart has already begun, Burr said, including reviewing previous applications and posting the job through the Alaska Teacher Placement service operated by the University of Alaska.

"We have 10 current candidates," Burr said, adding that not all 10 meet the requirements for an interview. "These will be whittled down and interviews will further shrink the applicant pool. Some of the 10 have applied to Wrangell before."

The position for high school/middle school principal has a salary range of \$88,366 to \$103,808.

Although applicants can hail from anywhere, Burr said it does help if they are from Alaska, since they would be "more familiar with many of the 'Alaska' uniquenesses in our classrooms and students. However, staff coming from other states can bring new perspectives and initiatives (found) in other states and different populations."

Burr said the state-operated retirement system makes it difficult to attract out-of-staters, "since our current system is not great for long-term staff." The state in 2006 moved away from a retirement plan that based set monthly pension checks on years of service, shifting to an employee savings plan similar to a 401(k) with an employer match.

Business manager Tammy Stromberg and IT director Bob Russell also have both resigned, and the district is accepting applications for those positions.

Jobseekers can apply through [alaskateacher.org](http://alaskateacher.org). Burr said the business manager and IT director positions are also posted on [indeed.com](http://indeed.com).

# Rep. Ortiz introduces bill to increase state funding for public schools

By SAM STOCKBRIDGE  
Ketchikan Daily News

A second bill has been introduced in the Legislature to significantly boost state funding for public schools.

Rep. Dan Ortiz, whose district covers Ketchikan, Wrangell and Metlakatla, introduced a bill on Feb. 8 to increase the state's per-pupil funding formula by 21%. The Senate Education Committee a week earlier introduced its own version with a 17% boost.

Ortiz's bill would add about \$320 million to the state budget.

The per-student funding formula has not budged in the past six years, squeezing school budgets, jeopardizing pro-

grams and staffing levels, and leading to increasing calls on legislators and the governor to raise the amount.

If passed into law, either of the two bills would increase state funding to the Wrangell School District by more than \$600,000 a year, about a 12% gain over current levels.

Ortiz said he filed the bill after hearing from numerous constituents about the need for an increase. "It was based on what I was hearing, quite convincingly, it was pretty alarming potential possibilities, from not just schools in my district, but from Anchorage School District, Kenai School District."

Districts statewide have been struggling to maintain services as the rate of

inflation over the past several years has significantly outpaced their funds. Ortiz said the Ketchikan School District, Wrangell School District and Metlakatla School District all have urged him to support an increase in the state formula.

"They made a good case," Ortiz said. "They talk about how we haven't really addressed the base student allocation in any meaningful way for quite some time, and during that time, of course, we've seen some significant inflation."

The representative said his bill is a "starting point" for further discussions with his fellow lawmakers. By introducing the bill, Ortiz said he's hoping to get the House talking about the issue well before the end of the session in a few

months.

"What it really does is it gets the conversation going on the House side, because we haven't seen any measure up to this point to even discuss the issue."

As of this week, the bill had not been scheduled for any committee hearings.

"One of the things that I think this bill will get to do will start to (flush) out where people are on the whole issue. ... In the end, we're all going to have that happen," he said. "And it's best to have it happen over time and have it happen over reflection, rather than waiting for the last days of the session and then just kind of being forced to vote one way or the other without really getting time to debate it or anything like that."

# Alaskans who attended college out of state more likely not to return home

By YERETH ROSEN  
Alaska Beacon

Nearly 18 years ago, about 6,000 young Alaskans left high school and launched into adulthood. Where did they end up?

Slightly half were still in Alaska as of 2021, but the percentage was much smaller for those who got college degrees outside of the state, according to an analysis by the Alaska Department of Labor.

Results are published in the February issue of Alaska Economic Trends, the monthly

magazine of the department's research and analysis division.

There is "nothing magical" about the class of 2005, said Dan Robinson, the department's chief of research and analysis and a co-author of the report. However, it is the oldest group for which researchers were able to amass the most information, he said.

The report follows up on earlier reports published in 2012 and in 2017 in Alaska Economic Trends that analyzed the class of 2005's situations and movements five years after leaving

high school. Together, the studies are part of a collaborative project of the Department of Labor, the Alaska Department of Education and the University of Alaska.

About three-quarters of those Alaskans who graduated from high school in 2005 chose to attend college at some point, and about a third wound up holding bachelor's or associate degrees by 2021, the newly published report said.

Of those class of 2005 members who earned two- or four-year college degrees within

Alaska, 55% were still in the state in 2021, according to the findings. But those who got their degrees outside of Alaska, only 25% were living in the state by 2021, according to the findings.

Whether that is a sign of an Alaska "brain drain" is open to interpretation. During the period, Robinson noted, there were plenty of degree-holders from elsewhere who moved into Alaska, part of a long-term demographic pattern of ebb and flow.

"It's always been a brain exchange. We get and we give," he said.

Of those 2005 high school graduates who attended college, most did so in Alaska, the analysis found. Among those who left Alaska for college, the most popular states were Washington, Oregon, Arizona and California.

The college experiences of the 2005 high school graduates, who are now in their 30s, generally predate Alaska's 10-year stretch of net outmigration. Robinson said it is likely that the percentage of Alaska college students attending school outside of the state has grown in recent years.

The report also analyzed professional and income outcomes

for the group. By 2021, health care was the top professional category for degree-holders from the 2005 high school year — possibly an indicator of health care's importance in the overall economy. For those without degrees, the top professional category was construction trades, according to the findings.

Class of 2005 members who obtained college degrees of some type significantly out-earned their colleagues without degrees — but that outcome took time, the results showed.

For the first few years after high school, those Alaskans who skipped college or attended without obtaining degrees out-earned the degree-holders. The turning point in the trend was 2011; by 2021, the average earned by degree-holding members of the class of 2005 was \$70,642 a year, compared to \$52,270 for those with some college but no degree and \$49,284 for those without any college, according to the findings.

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## Obituaries

# Lifelong resident and fisherman Felix Villarma dies at 90

Felix Villarma passed away on Jan. 22 in Wrangell.

He was born on Feb. 28, 1932, in Wrangell. "He loved Wrangell!" the family wrote.

"From a very early age, Felix was a hard worker. He cut halibut cheeks, sold scrap fish to the local mink farm, and was a paperboy for the Wrangell Sentinel." He graduated from Wrangell High School in 1949, where he was an excellent basketball player. He also worked as a deck hand on several different boats during those years.

In the fall of 1950, he left Wrangell to attend Southern Idaho College of Education in Albion, Idaho. It was there that he met his future wife, Verda Adams, at a high school football game. "Verda was a cheerleader and couldn't keep her eyes off the handsome guy in the bleachers," his family wrote. "Every time she looked up, he would

wink at her. That started their love affair of over 70 years."

Felix joined the Navy in 1952 and was stationed in Whidbey Island in Puget Sound. On May 20, 1955, on a 10-day leave, Felix and Verda were married in Elba, Idaho. Felix had one more year to serve and spent it in Australia and Japan. After his discharge in May 1956, the couple moved to Wrangell.

Felix continued to commercial fish, gillnet, troll, longshore and worked in construction. "He always intended to go back to college, but Wrangell was in his blood." Felix and Verda bought a house and started a family and soon after came Carmen, Craig and Jeff.

Felix retired from longshoring at age 62 but gillnetted until he was 80. He never drove a car but rode his bike everywhere. His motto to all of us was, "Keep Movin'," and he did that until his medical issues made him stop.

"We all gathered to celebrate his 90th birthday in February 2022 and it was a joyous celebration for everyone! Felix loved his family. We are all blessed to have had Felix for all these 90 plus years. All of us have special memories. We love you and we'll miss you so much," his family wrote.

He is survived by wife, Verda, of 67 years; daughter Carmen (Dennis); sons Craig (Margaret) and Jeff (Heidi); grandchildren Michael (Deanna), Michelle, Mason and Eliza; great-grandchildren Emmett and Miller; sisters Dolly (Dar) Walter, Madeline (Blair) Brainard and Alma (Leroy) Fennimore; brothers Winston B. Davies (Renate) and Dewayne Davies (Debbie); and many more nieces and nephews.

Mass was held at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Wrangell on Jan. 30. He was laid to rest at Sunset Garden Cemetery in Wrangell.



FELIX VILLARMA

# Long-time Wrangell resident Marlene Ann Clarke dies at 86



MARLENE ANN CLARKE

Marlene Ann Clarke passed away Feb. 7 in the Wrangell long-term care facility.

She was born on April 3, 1936, to Nellie Prescott and Howard Messinger in Wrangell. She spent most of her childhood in Wrangell except for short stays in Juneau, Haines and Anchorage. She came back in the third grade and graduated from Wrangell High School in 1954.

Working summers in the shrimp and fish canneries gave her the push to move to California to try something different after graduation. She took business and office machine courses.

In 1956 she married Merlin Liefer and moved to Illinois. They had a daughter, Dianne, and a son, Greg. In 1959 they moved to Wrangell. Marlene and Merlin divorced in 1962 and Marlene started working for National Bank of Alaska. In 1964 she transferred to the Air Force Communications System, located in the post office. At that time, fast messages were sent by teletype. She remained there until marrying Dr. Jack Clarke.

Dr. Clarke accepted a position with the Veterans Administration in 1966 and the couple moved to Leavenworth, Kansas, for two years, followed by Hot Springs, South Dakota, for two years.

Marlene and her teenagers moved back to Wrangell in 1970 after Dr. Clarke's death. She worked at the post office for 12 years and quit to open Joys Gifts. The shop closed in 1996.

She was on the Citizens Advisory Council, University of Alaska Sitka campus, for more than 20 years. She served on the Wrangell Medical Center Board from 1999-2003. She was active in the Episcopal Church and volunteered at the polls on election days. She was a passionate member of Southeast Alaska Conservation Council. "She felt her years volunteering were a small way to say thank you to this community and state which she loved deeply," her family wrote.

She moved to Oregon in 2016 to be closer to medical specialists and her children and grandchildren. "She returned to Wrangell at the end of 2018 because she missed it so much."

She loved bird-watching boat trips, playing bridge and cribbage. She was an avid reader, and when her eyesight failed she listened to audio books. Marlene loved jazz and her jazz CDs were enjoyed by the staff at the long-term care facility. In the

past, she even had a jazz show on KSTK.

Marlene is preceded in death by her father, mother and brother, Ron Schmitz.

She is survived by her sisters

Linnea Brooks and Donna Werner; daughter Dianne Cassidy; son Greg Leifer; grandchildren Joy (Sean) Healy, Megan (Brian) Friend, and Lauren (Kevin) Bailey; great-grandchildren Jackson

Wayland, Ellie Bailey, Charlotte Friend and Tobias Bailey.

Service will be held in the spring. Donations in Marlene's name can be made to Wrangell Fire Department.

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# Fewer Alaska students seek scholarships to attend college in-state

SEAN MAGUIRE  
Anchorage Daily News

The vast majority of Alaska high school students eligible for college scholarships that require them to study in-state are choosing to go Outside, according to a new report from the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education.

The Alaska Performance Scholarship was first established in 2011 to encourage high school students to excel and stay in Alaska. Roughly \$100 million in scholarships have been distributed since then to a little more than 29,000 students.

The merit-based program has three tiers, the highest paying \$4,755 per year to the top-achieving students. Recipients can use the scholarship to study at the University of Alaska or at other institutions, including the Alaska Vocational Technical Center in Seward.

But fewer students are choosing to use the scholarship to study in Alaska. The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education recently released a report that found a record-low 22% of eligible stu-

dents chose to use the scholarship in 2022, dropping from a high of 39% in 2016.

"We're consciously working on bringing that number up to 50 (percent)," said Pat Pitney, president of the University of Alaska.

The vast majority of those surveyed wanted to study outside Alaska or had already accepted an offer to study out of state.

The commission found budget cuts to the University of Alaska had made it less attractive and so had uncertainty around the state fund used to pay for the scholarships. The Legislature established a new, secure college scholarship fund last year after Gov. Mike Dunleavy's budget decision in 2019 jeopardized the money, and university administrators have tried to stabilize the system's budget.

There is evidence the scholarship has helped keep young people in Alaska during a period of high outmigration. The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education found 73% of high school students who graduated in 2014 and received the scholarship were still living in Alaska eight years later.

But the number of students eligible for

the scholarship has been falling. A record-low 17% of graduating Alaska students were eligible for the award in 2022 — half of what it was in 2014.

"This is concerning to us," said Sana Efird, executive director of the commission.

Eligibility for the scholarship is based on grade-point averages, results from standardized testing and a curriculum that often sees students start "rigorous academic coursework" in the ninth grade, Efird said. Alaska students have regularly ranked in the bottom of the nation for math and English assessments.

Efird said there are multiple reasons why fewer Alaska students were eligible for the scholarship. Some do not have access to the curriculum to qualify, others don't have guidance counselors at their schools to help them. Some students, particularly in rural Alaska, need to travel for testing.

There are urban-rural divides and disparities in eligibility by region and ethnicity: 6% of Alaska Native students were eligible for the scholarship in 2022 compared to 23% of white students.

Standardized testing requirements were

temporarily waived in 2020 and 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligibility rates for the scholarship rose to their highest-ever levels and the number of eligible Alaska Native students shot up by 159%.

When standardized testing was reinstated, eligibility rates plummeted for Alaska Native students and dropped for all other students to their lowest level yet. Efird said there was confusion among some applicants over the shifting rules, which are set in statute.

There have been calls for reform after a 2021 report found structural problems with the scholarship: Students get the award after they graduate, but many already have made college decisions in their junior year. Others don't learn about it until it's too late or that they need to also apply for federal student aid to qualify.

In addition, the average tuition at the University of Alaska has risen to \$9,800 per year, but the scholarship has not kept pace. Legislation to increase the scholarship amounts is pending.

# Alaska backs federal lawsuit to block distribution of abortion pill

BY JENNIFER SHUTT  
Alaska Beacon

WASHINGTON — Attorneys general representing nearly two dozen Republican states, including Alaska, are backing a lawsuit that would remove the abortion pill from throughout the United States after more

than two decades, eliminating the option even in states where abortion access remains legal.

The state of Missouri filed its own brief in the case Friday while Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch filed a brief on behalf of her state as well as Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indi-

ana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Wyoming.

"The serious nature of the FDA's unlawful actions, and the agency's decision to invite law-breaking by private parties and government actors across the

country, favors broad relief," the 22 Republican attorneys general wrote in the multi-state brief.

Regardless that the administration of Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy supports the attorneys general lawsuit, abortions are legal in Alaska. In 1997, the state Supreme Court recognized a fundamental right to "reproductive choice" under the Alaska Constitution.

The federal case against abortion pills — Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration — was originally filed in the U.S. District Court for the North District of Texas in mid-November by Alliance Defending Freedom, an anti-abortion legal organization.

The lawsuit argues, on behalf of four anti-abortion medical organizations and four anti-abortion physicians, that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration exceeded its authority when it approved mifepristone to end pregnancies in 2000.

The prescription medication was originally approved for up to seven weeks into a pregnancy but is now approved for up to 10 weeks. It is used as part of a two-drug regimen that includes misoprostol as the second pharmaceutical.

The abortion pill, mifepristone, is legal at the federal level, though several GOP states have laws in place that restrict abortion to less than 10 weeks, setting up a dispute between state law and the federal government's jurisdiction to approve pharmaceuticals.

If the judge doesn't pull the abortion pill entirely, the anti-abortion organizations' lawsuit argues to move the dosage and prescribing process back to how it worked before 2016, when the FDA made changes to its approval.

The U.S. Justice Department argued in its court filing the anti-abortion groups' lawsuit "is extraordinary and unprecedented."

"Plaintiffs have pointed to no case, and the government has been unable to locate any example, where a court has second-guessed FDA's safety and efficacy determination and ordered a widely available FDA-approved drug to be removed from the market — much less an example that includes a two-decade delay," wrote attorneys for the U.S. Justice Department.

The Republican attorneys general said in their briefs that "while the FDA is authorized to evaluate new drugs for safety and effectiveness, states are primarily responsible for protecting the health and welfare of their citizens."

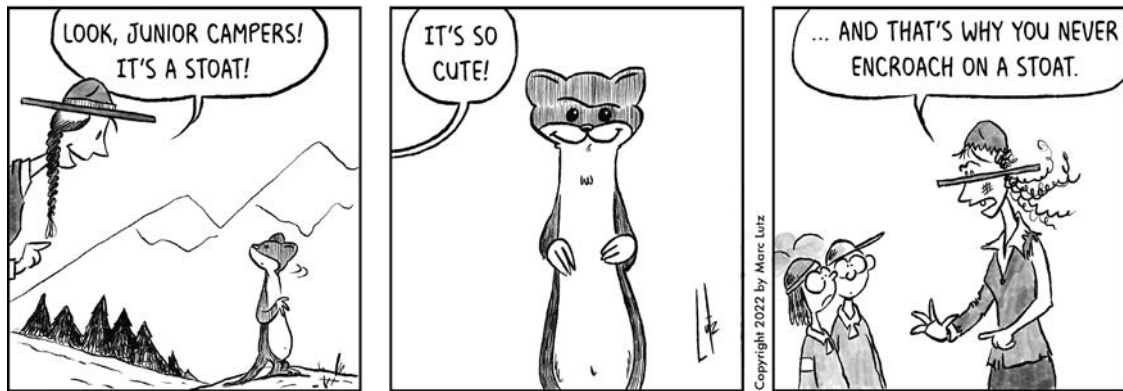
The judge in the lawsuit, Trump appointee Matthew Joseph Kacsmaryk, could rule on whether to pull mifepristone from the market as soon as this month.

Any ruling is likely to be appealed to the conservative-leaning 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and could eventually find itself in the U.S. Supreme Court.

*The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.*

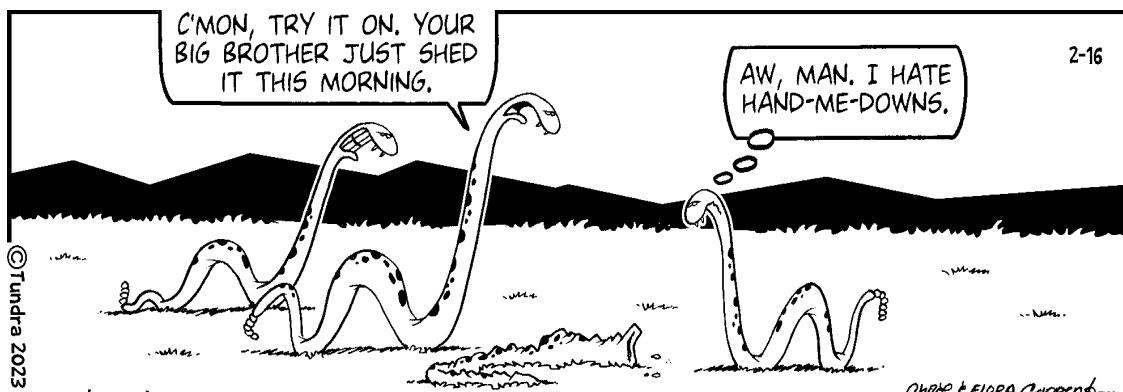
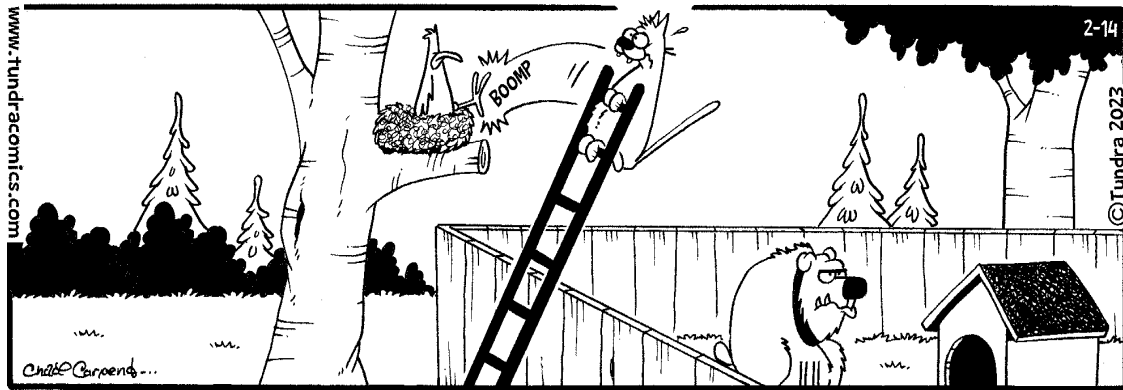
## Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



## Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



## Police report

**Monday, Feb. 6**  
Domestic violence order: Violation.

Agency assist: Ambulance.  
Found bicycle.  
Disturbance.

**Tuesday, Feb. 7**  
Parking complaint: Written warning issued.

Agency assist: Verbal warning for speeding.  
Dog at large. Owner picked up dog and purchased license.

**Wednesday, Feb. 8**  
Civil matter: Child custody.

**Thursday, Feb. 9**  
Traffic stop: Citation issued for operating in violation of provisional license, verbal warning for taillight out.

Traffic stop: Citation issued for speed in school zone and failure to provide proof of insurance.  
Traffic stop: Citation issued for speed in school zone and failure to provide proof of insurance.  
Traffic stop: Verbal warning

for improper use of tags and speeding.  
Agency assist: AP&T.

**Friday, Feb. 10**  
Summons service.  
Suspicious activity.  
Noise complaint.  
Illegal parking citation.

**Saturday, Feb. 11**  
Stolen property: Property was found and given back to owner.  
Agency assist: Ambulance requested.

Dead eagle.  
Found dog.  
Assault.  
Suspicious activity.  
Suspicious person.  
Gunshot heard: Unable to locate.

**Sunday, Feb. 12**  
Domestic violence order.  
Noise complaint.  
Found keys.

There were three subpoenas served during this reporting period.

# Endangered listing for sunflower sea stars could affect West Coast fishing

By YERETH ROSEN  
Alaska Beacon

One of the biggest sea stars in the world has been devastated by a malady likened to an underwater "zombie apocalypse" and could soon be granted Endangered Species Act protection.

Sunflower sea stars, fast-swimming creatures that can have up to 24 arms and grow to three feet in diameter, have largely vanished from their habitat, which stretches from the western tip of Alaska's Aleutian Islands to the waters off Mexico's Baja California.

The culprit is sea star wasting syndrome, a body-mangling disease sweeping the North Pacific that scientists say is the biggest known epidemic to hit any wild marine species. Multiple species are affected, but sunflower sea stars have particularly suffered.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is on the verge of a decision on an Endangered Species Act listing sought in a 2021 petition filed by an environmental group, the Center for Biological Diversity. The petition cites an approximately 90% loss of the animals since 2013.

"Sunflower sea stars have been decimated by sea star wasting disease, urgent action is needed to prevent their extinction," the center's petition said.

A listing determination should come within a month, said Sadie Wright, a Juneau-based protected species biologist with NOAA Fisheries. If the agency decides to list sunflower sea stars as threatened or endangered, a proposed rule would be published, followed by a final rule a year later, she said.

Endangered Species Act listings allow the federal government to take actions to conserve wild populations facing threats of extinction.

Sea star wasting syndrome has been linked to climate change. The disease "does appear to be exacerbated by warming ocean temperatures, or significant shifts in water temperature," Wright said by email.

Preserving sunflower sea stars is about more than preventing extinction of a distinctive and colorful sea creature. Their loss is "devastating for the entire kelp forest ecosystem in which they live," the Center for Biological Diversity's listing petition said.

"Sunflower sea stars are a keystone species and a top predator in the intertidal zone. In the absence of a healthy population of sea stars, sea urchins can proliferate and devour the kelp forests that provide habitat for many fish and other wildlife. The decline of sunflower sea stars has caused a cascade of harmful changes

in the ocean food web," it said.

While the most severe impacts have been in the southern parts of the range, sunflower sea stars' disappearance from Alaska waters has been profound. Prince William Sound and Kachemak Bay have been some of the places notably affected, said Brenda Konar, a marine biology professor with the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

"I used to see a ton of them while diving in Kachemak and they totally disappeared for a while," Konar said by email. "They are starting to make a patchy comeback but it is really slow."

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature in 2021 listed the sunflower sea star as critically endangered. However, the group uses different listing criteria than those used in the Endangered Species Act, Wright said.

Listing holds possible implications for the fishing industry. While the warming-associated wasting disease is the overwhelming threat, an additional threat is bycatch, the unintentional catch in harvests targeting other species. The animals occasionally wind up in the pots, traps and nets used to catch fish, so listing could mean stricter rules preventing that.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game and some Alaska fishing groups, in comments to NOAA Fisheries, argued against

an endangered species listing. Their comments said listing is premature and based on incomplete science and that NOAA Fisheries should consider that there are some signs of recovery emerging in Alaska waters.

Even if the population is nearly wiped out in the southern part of the range, the Department of Fish and Game said in its comment letter, sunflower sea stars could shift their range north. "This possibility changes the lens through which the risk of extinction should be viewed: A population that shifts its distribution can look like an extinction at the local scale, but not at the regional scale or across the range," the department's letter said.

Preserving sunflower sea stars could benefit the Alaska fishing industry, however. By keeping urchin populations in check and thus protecting kelp beds, sunflower sea stars benefit the marine ecosystem that produces the fish the commercial industry harvests, scientists say.

A possible benefit of listing would be more attention to the sunflower sea stars' plight — and that could lead to more

support for a pioneering captive-breeding program at the University of Washington's Friday Harbor Laboratories.

The program, a cooperative effort with The Nature Conservancy, started with 16 adults collected in the wild in 2019. The group is now in its third generation, with more than 100 1-year-olds now at the lab, said senior research scientist Jason Hodin, who leads the program.

The Friday Harbor Laboratories operation is far too small to repopulate the Pacific coast with sunflower sea stars, and that is not its mission, Hodin said. "We're not a sunflower sea star production facility," he said. "We're scientists. We're trying to understand the lifecycle of organisms."

However, the work at Friday Harbor might lead to new captive-breeding programs, and restocking parts of the range might wind up as part of a recovery plan, he said. "If we can get more of these, and larger-scale ones, there's a lot more that can be done," he said.

*The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.*

## THANK YOU

The "Wrangell Community Final Arrangements and End of Life Publication" will be given out free to the community this spring. A big thanks from the Hospice Committee to Cathy Gross for donating a spectacular cover photo.

— Cindy Martin

We would like to thank everyone for all the kind thoughts and prayers in the passing of our loved one, Felix Villarma. A special thank you to Dr. Lynn Prysunka and Dr. Victor Harrison for the kind and com-

passionate care they gave to Felix these past months; for all the cards, phone calls, flowers and food; for Bill and Cheryl Goodale offering the Stikine Fireside Room; and Jake Harris for preparing the food for the reception. Thank you to Father Jose Thomas, the readers, ush-

ers and the beautiful music for his service. Last but not least to Brian Merritt for playing taps at the cemetery. What a wonderful community we live in. No wonder Felix loved Wrangell.

— The Villarma family

### PUBLIC NOTICE

James Leslie II is making application for a new Brewery License AS 04.11.130 liquor license doing business as Alaska Waters, Inc. located at 5 Front St., Unit 1, Wrangell.

Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov

Publish Feb. 15, 22; March 1, 2023

### PUBLIC NOTICE

James Leslie II is making application for a new Common Carrier License AS 04.11.180 liquor license doing business as Alaska Waters, Inc. located at 5 Front St., Unit 1, Wrangell (dispensing on jet boat tours).

Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1600 Anchorage, AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov

Publish Feb. 15, 22; March 1, 2023

### CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE To Purchase Borough-Owned Tidelands

As per Wrangell Municipal Code 16.12.040, notice is hereby given that a request to purchase Borough-owned tidelands consisting of approximately 2,867 square feet of filled tidelands, described as Filled Tidelands, Lot 15, Block 1-A, ATS 83, requested by the current lease holder.

The Wrangell Planning and Zoning Commission and Port Commission have reviewed this request and approved the request to move forward with the tidelands purchase with conditions.

Any person wishing to protest this application to purchase the proposed Borough-owned property described as:

2,867 square feet of filled tidelands described as Lot 15, Block 1-A, Tidelands Subdivision ATS 83, on the corner of Brueger and Lynch Streets.

... must file a written protest with the Borough Clerk, no later than Feb. 24, 2023, at 4 p.m.

Written protests may be emailed to clerk@wrangell.com or delivered to 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, AK 99929. Any such protest shall state the reason(s) for the protest in detail.

Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk  
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Feb. 1, 8 and 15, 2023

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### PUBLIC NOTICE

Hungry Beaver, Inc., dba Marine Bar located at 640 Shakes Street, Wrangell, is applying for transfer of a Beverage Dispensary AS 04.11.090 liquor license to Hungry Beaver Pizza LLC.

Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 or email alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov.

Publish Feb. 1, 8 and 15, 2023

## CLASSIFIED

### BOAT FOR SALE

2013 inspected 14-passenger Bentz boat with twin LP-6 Yanmar diesel engines (2,400 hours) and 241 Hamilton pumps with turbo impeller. Like new condition. Captain/owner is retiring. \$319,000. Recent survey puts value at \$325,000. Captainron389@yahoo.com or call 907-518-1180.

### FREE PAPERS

Stop by the Sentinel to pick some up.

### FREE ADS

Do you have something to sell? Having a garage sale? Looking to buy something? Classified ads for individuals and community groups are free in the Sentinel. Contact Amber at 907-874-2301 or email wrgsent@gmail.com.

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Keith Kagee has been appointed executor of Ronald Kagee's Estate. All persons having claims against this estate need to contact Keith in writing at PO Box 762, Wrangell, Alaska 99929. Claims need to be submitted within two months or be forever barred.

Publish Feb. 8, 15, and 22, 2023

### CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE INVITING BIDS Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) System

Notice is hereby given that the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will receive sealed bids for the construction of the AUTOMATED METERING INFRASTRUCTURE (AMI) SYSTEM project. Work consists of providing and implementing a mesh Advanced Metering Infrastructure System (AMI) with a smart grid to facilitate two-way communications with its electric utility service to improve staff efficiencies, customer service, ensure billing accuracy, and perform data collection. The Estimate for all work is approximately \$700,000 to \$750,000.

Sealed bids will be received by the City and Borough of Wrangell, P.O. Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, or located at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, until 2 p.m. prevailing time on March 2, 2023, and publicly opened and read at that time.

The Contract Documents are available in electronic format and can be downloaded from the City and Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs section. Downloading Contract Documents from the City and Borough of Wrangell's website requires registration with the Borough Clerk in order to be placed on the Plan Holders List and to ensure receipt of subsequent Addenda. Failure to register may adversely affect your proposal. It is the Offeror's responsibility to ensure that they have received all Addenda affecting this Solicitation. To be registered, contact the Borough Clerk at 907-874-2381 or at clerk@wrangell.com

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids, to waive any informality in a Bid, or to make award as it best serves the interests of the Owner.

Jeff Good, Borough Manager  
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Jan. 25, Feb. 1, 8 and 15, 2023

# Scientists say collapse such as Bering crab stocks could happen more often

By YERETH ROSEN  
Alaska Beacon

The first-ever cancellation of Alaska's Bering Sea snow crab harvest was unprecedented and a shock to the state's fishing industry and the communities that depend on it.

Unfortunately for that industry and those communities, those conditions are likely to be common in the future, according to several scientists who made presentations at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium held in late January.

The ocean conditions that triggered the crash were likely warmer than any extreme possible during the preindustrial period but now can be expected in about one of every seven years, said Mike Litzow, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration scientist in Kodiak. By the 2040s, those conditions can be expected one out of every three years, he said.

Blame "borealization" for

the disaster befalling snow crab, which is an Arctic species, Litzow said. That term refers to an ecosystem becoming boreal, with groups of organisms — called "taxa" by scientists — that have been south of the Arctic until recently.

"If we think about an Arctic animal at the southern edge of its range that's exposed to really rapid warming, that leads us sort of inevitably to the concept of borealization," said Litzow, director of NOAA Fisheries Kodiak laboratory and shellfish assessment program. "As you warm Arctic ecosystems, those systems become prone to a state change, where Arctic taxa such as snow crab become replaced by subarctic taxa that are better able to tolerate ice-free and warm conditions."

Snow crab are dependent on the winter sea ice and the cold conditions created even after the seasonal melt, he said. While they are widely dispersed through the Bering Sea, the sweet spot for

"We really need to start evaluating our risks less on our lived experience and more in terms of the trends going forward."

Mike Litzow,

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration scientist

the commercial harvest — the place where the crab are big enough to be commercially valuable — is in the southeastern Bering Sea.

But consecutive years of extreme warmth in the Bering Sea, conditions that precluded much ice formation even in winter, kept temperatures above the 28-degree Fahrenheit threshold that is ideal for snow crab — and made the area suitable for sea life from farther south, including groundfish that may prey on juvenile crab, Litzow said.

Though fishery managers are in the process of crafting a detailed plan to rebuild

the stock to help harvesters, processors and communities in the short term, in the long term the suitable habitat for snow crab will be farther north, he said.

That points to a need to change management of snow crab and other fisheries, he said. "We really need to start evaluating our risks less on our lived experience and more in terms of the trends going forward," he said.

Borealization is occurring around the Arctic Ocean and the seas that border it, a product of climate change.

In Alaska's Bering and Chukchi seas, that means

that suitable habitat for Arctic-specialized species like snow crab and fat-packed Arctic cod is shrinking, and lower-latitude species like Pacific cod and pollock are increasingly found at higher-latitude areas, as University of Alaska Fairbanks-led research has detailed. Borealization is happening on land, too, with woody plants growing farther north and animal populations shifting.

For Bering Sea snow crab, which in 2021 dwindled to the lowest abundance of adults observed in the 50-year record, the crash took multiple steps.

The low abundance in 2021 followed what was a record-high population of crab surveyed in 2018. Dramatic increases in ocean conditions forced those snow crabs into a smaller area, said Gordon Krueze, a professor emeritus at UAF's College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences. The higher temperatures, combined with a much denser population, increased crab metabolism — so much so that the crabs' caloric needs in some cases quadrupled, "leading to mass starvation," Krueze said.

Between snow crab and red king crab closures, losses are not just the nearly \$300 million in foregone direct payments that the state has calculated, said Scott Goodman, executive director of the Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation. Losses probably amount to at least \$1 billion when all multipliers are considered, "which really paints a bleak picture for the industry," Goodman said at the symposium.

"The reality in Alaska is that major plants that process crab are closing," he said. "The reality at the community level ... impacts are extreme. Entire fleets are tied up."

One ongoing project, though, offers a glimpse of hope that human intervention could restore the populations in the future.

Chris Long, a scientist working at the NOAA Alaska Fisheries Science Center laboratory in Kodiak, has been experimenting for several years with projects that might show how to enhance natural crab stocks with hatchery-raised larvae. Much of his work focuses on red king crab in Kodiak, a region where the once-thriving king crab fishery crashed in the 1980s and never recovered.

In experiments so far, very few of the larvae have survived after being spread in the water, at best about 2%, he said in his presentation at the symposium. However, that survival rate is not much different from what happens in the wild, where crab larvae are tempting and ideal food for bigger fish.

Legislation passed last session may turn out to help make mariculture-assisted crab fisheries a reality, Long said. The law expanded authorizations for nonprofit hatcheries, adding various types of shellfish to the suite of species that those organizations will be allowed to grow. It also created a framework for the state to regulate cultivation of those shellfish.

If the process works, crab enhancement projects are more likely to get industry funding, thanks to the new legislation, Long said.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. [Alaskabeacon.com](http://Alaskabeacon.com).

## MARCH 1 DEADLINE

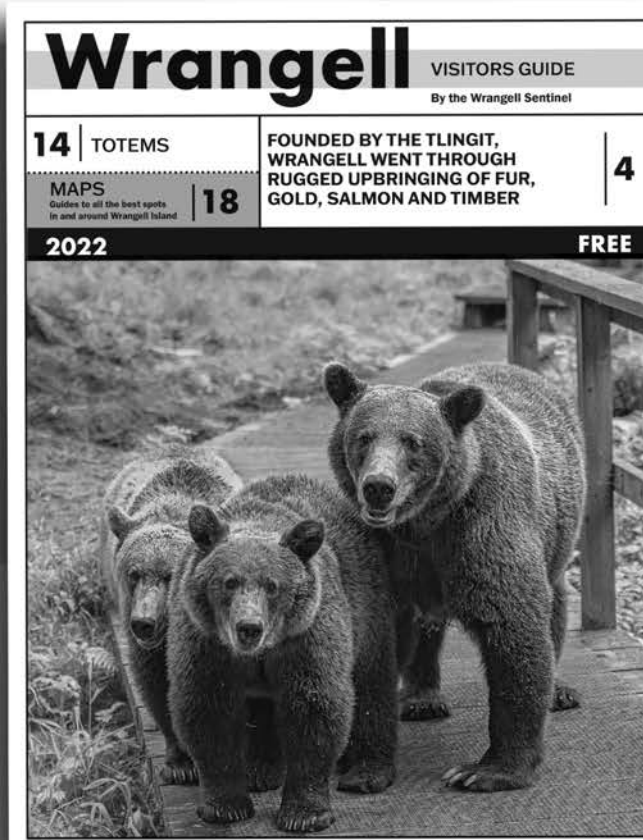
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The Sentinel and the Wrangell Convention and Visitor Bureau are working together on the 2023 visitor and business guide

The full-color, 40-page booklet will be available online, along with 10,000 printed copies to mail out, take to trade shows and hand out to visitors in town or thinking of coming to town.

**The deadline to reserve your ad space is March 1. You will not be billed until May 1.**

Call or email Amber at the Sentinel for more information.  
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